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Challenges to teacher education and sustainable development in Nigeria

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Abstract

Human capital development through education is a vital pathway for achieving an accelerated and sustainable development of any nation. It was in realization of the fact that human capital development through education was made one of the core priorities of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Nigeria. However, despite being frequently underestimated, teacher education remains fundamental to achieving educational goal in Nigeria. This is because no education can rise above the quality of the teacher. In this context, the author examined how teacher education can be made more effective and functional by overcoming some impediments identified. The study showed that policy efforts at effective teacher education in Nigeria have failed to produce quality teachers due to several identified challenges. The study recommended that if the challenges like ineffective teacher training, faulty teacher recruitment, defective curricula, low funding, in-conducive environment for teaching and learning, and lack of motivation can be overcome, it would lead to achieving National Development in Nigeria and the realization of the SDGs.

1 Introduction

Globally, education is the bedrock of a nation's development (Ignatius and Umotong, 2022). The development of any country depends on the quality of its educational system, which in turn depends on the quality of the teachers. The high rate of technological breakthroughs and development achieved by countries like China, India, Indonesia, Singapore, Brazil, is because of the investment in their educational system (Jain et al., 2022; Li and Wye, 2022). The investment in human resource through a viable educational system led to their transition from a developing to a developed nation. The quality of the educational system is a determinant of the caliber and quality of its human resources available in any country (Keji, 2021). But this can only be made possible by the quality of its teachers. No wonder it was clearly stated in the National Policy on Education (NPE) of Nigeria (FGN, 2004) that "no educational system can rise above the quality of its teachers". This statement obviously showed the government's commitment to teacher education in Nigeria.

Furthermore, in realization of the importance of teacher education in Nigeria, the NPE (FGN, 2004) identified the following as the objectives of teacher education.

- To produce highly motivated, conscientious, and efficient classroom teachers for all levels of our educational system.
- To encourage further the spirit of equality and creativity in teaching.
- Help teachers fit into the social life of the community and society at large and enhance their commitment to national goals.
- Provide teachers with the intellectual and professional background adequate for their assignment and make them adequately adaptable to changing situations.
- To enhance teachers' commitment to the teaching profession.

Achieving these objectives largely depend on the type and quality of education provided to teachers. As Ukeje (1975) rightly asserted: "Teachers are the hub of any educational system, and the success of the system depends on their numbers, their devotion, and their effectiveness and no education system can be stronger than its teachers."

Although the government has made various efforts to achieve the objectives of teacher education policies in Nigeria, the low quality of teachers is an indication that all is not well. Examining the problem of teacher education in Nigeria, Kolo (2008) submits that teacher education has been transformed over the past four decades of Nigeria's independence, but sadly on a downward trend in terms of the compromise of the core values that should inform quality and improve teacher education.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are seventeen in number and are global agenda aiming at achieving goals, in developing countries, including Nigeria, by the year 2030. They include: poverty eradication, zero hunger, good health and well–being, quality education, gender equality, clean water and sanitation, affordable and clean energy, decent work and economic growth, industry, innovation and infrastructure, reducing inequality, sustainable cities and communities, responsible consumption and production, climate action, life below water, life on land, peace, justice and strong institutions, and partnerships for the goals. The United Nations also has stated specific targets to achieve each of the goals. Specific timeframes are adopted to achieve specific targets for each of the SDGs (ACCIONA, n.d.). Each country is encouraged to ensure the necessary machinery for achieving these targets by 2030. The UN also initiated indicators to measure the progress made by each country in achieving the SDGs. Some institutions and legal frameworks were also put in place to ensure the effective implementation of the SDGs. A particular office (Office of the Senior Special Adviser to the President on SDGs) was created in the Presidency to coordinate and monitor the SDGs' implementation and achievement across Nigeria's states. The government collaborates with other international stakeholders like the UNDP and the UN. The Voluntary National Review (VNR) report was initiated by United Nations and UNDP to assess the country's performance in achieving the SDGs. The VNR is a tool used to monitor and review seven key areas of SDGs' priorities that are beneficial to the country's development (Asaju, 2022).

It is pertinent to mention that human capital development through qualitative and effective education constitutes the foundation on which the other aspects of the agenda can be achieved. This also brought to the forefront the importance of teacher education in achieving the government's development agenda, especially the SDGs. It was in this context that the paper discusses the meaning and objectives of teacher education in Nigeria. The paper also identified the various challenges to effective teacher education in Nigeria and their effect on the developmental agenda.

2 Concept of teacher education

To better understand the concept of teacher education, the two key concepts, education and teacher, need to be defined. Education is the process of transmitting societal norms, values, and desirable attitudes from one generation to another (Naziev, 2017). It implies the process of teaching, training, and learning in schools and colleges for the development of knowledge and skills so as to prepare individuals to live happily with themselves and with others in society. This is in line with Fafunwa (1974)'s definition of education as "the aggregate of all the processes through which a child develops abilities, attitudes, and other forms of behavior which are of positive value to society." Thus, education prepares one to live a harmonious, fruitful, and productive life, with himself and his family and with the society at large.

Teaching is an attempt to help people acquire some skills, attitudes, knowledge, ideas, and appreciation (Clark and Star, 1991). It is the interaction between a teacher and a student under the teacher's responsibility to bring about the expected change in students' behavior. It is in line with this that Awuzie (2008) described teaching as the business of those involved in the act of changing human behavior and transforming society for the better, particularly when their actions render them perceptively significant, and recognizable to others because of the consequences they accomplish and the unique manner they do them. Therefore, the task of the teacher is to create or influence desirable changes in the behavior of the learners (Blazar

and Kraft, 2016). The teacher, however, must possess the knowledge that could bring about positive changes in the learner's attitude and behavior. In other words, the teacher should have the necessary wherewithal to effect those changes.

A good teacher must possess certain qualities or values that are regarded as noble to the profession. These qualities include good character, competency in a discipline, flexibility, open-mindedness, kindness, firmness, neatness, and the ability to communicate well, among others (Hamza et al., 2015). These qualities endear the teacher to his learner and the society at large. Oyerinde (2007) described the teacher as "the spark that fixed the whole development process, the key man in the drive for progress."

Teachers are the center of the educational system (Neugebauer, 2019). They translate educational policies and programs into actions. Thus, teacher education is fundamental to achieving the nation's educational objectives or goals, i.e., human capital development (Adelakun et al., 2011). Teacher education refers to the academic pedagogies, trainings, and orientations of those in the pre-occupation of education and the training of children and youths (Kitchen and Petrarca, 2016). A broad and functional definition of teacher education was given by Okafor (1988). He defined teacher education as that: "form of education which is properly planned and systematically tailored and applied for the cultivation of those who teach or will teach, particularly but not exclusively in the primary and post-primary levels of schooling. In its extended dimension, it also encompasses the professional preparation of administrators, supervisors, and guidance counsellors."

From the above definition, it is clear that teacher education not only trains teachers for all levels of education but also trains administrators, supervisors, counselors, guidance, and other professionals who complement the work of classroom teachers. Without the complementary functions of these categories of professionals, the work of the classroom teachers will not be effectively accomplished. This could jeopardize the achievement of educational objectives.

As further asserted by Ukeje (2000), in a developing country like Nigeria, with multi-ethnic and religious diversities and the concomitant problems, i.e., social, political, and economic issues, education is the only known potent instrument for social reconstruction or social change. Teacher education is, therefore, a vital instrument for accelerated and sustainable economic, social, and political development of any nation, including Nigeria.

3 Teacher education in Nigeria from a historical and policy perspective

Teacher education in Nigeria was started with the introduction of western formal education by the missionaries. The main objective was to help teachers fulfil their roles as teachers and catechists (Fafunwa, 1974). Later, when more schools were established, it became necessary to train indigenous Nigerian teachers. Thus, some teacher training centers and departments were established in different parts of the country.

With the increase in enrollment in schools, especially primary schools, various teacher training colleges were established to train Grade 1 to 3 teachers. Following the Ashby Commission Report in 1960 (Asiwaju, 1972), and in an effort to produce indigenously qualified teachers, the government established the Advanced Teachers College to produce teachers with a Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE) to teach in the various secondary schools. To ensure and enhance quality control in teacher education, the federal government stated in the NPE that all teachers from pre-primary to university level should be professionally trained, and NCE should be the minimum entry qualification into the teaching profession.

The policy further stated that all teachers with lesser qualifications were to be assisted to have at least the NCE as a minimum qualification. Those teachers in service who are unable to acquire NCE should resign from the teaching profession. The policy also makes it mandatory for those with higher degrees who found themselves in the teaching service without the requisite qualification to undertake a Post-Graduate Diploma (PGD) or Professional Diploma in Education (PDE). The Teacher Registration Council (TRC) was

established to ensure the accreditation, registration, certification, and discipline of those in the teaching profession. The policy also stipulated other conditions of service, such as opportunities for promotion at all levels to enhance career structure, and a nationwide review of their condition of service (Awuzie, 2008).

In view of these policy measures, it was expected that the objectives of teacher education would be achieved and subsequently have a greater bearing on the nation's educational policy. However, the question remained whether these policy measures are sufficient to achieve the objectives of high intellectual standards and a committed teaching workforce. In practice, various mitigating factors have constrained their impact. These challenges continue to impede progress toward the broader developmental objectives. The challenges were succinctly discussed below.

4 Methods

This paper adopted the qualitative research approach. Data used were sourced from journals, newspapers, official documents of the Federal government of Nigeria, especially from the Handbook on Education Policy and some international documents and papers. The data were analyzed using content analysis. This method was also adopted by Santra and Mohapatra (2025) in their study, which is similar to this study.

5 Results and discussion

In his inaugural speech as the President of Nigeria, President Musa Yar'adua made human capital development through education a top priority. This latter constituted one of the cardinal points of his Seven-Point Agenda. The Seven-Point Agenda was born out of his desire to make Nigeria one of the twenty most developed countries in the world by the year 2020. Unfortunately, the above agenda was not achieved. Another agenda, the SDGs, was initiated by the United Nations Organization in 2016. But the question was, can these development agendas be achieved without an effective and functional educational system?

It is pertinent to note that human capital development polices of a nation are inculcated in its educational system, and no education system can rise above the teachers. This made teacher education a pre-requisite for achieving the SDGs, especially human capital development. However, this can only be made possible when some major challenges confronting teacher education in Nigeria are to overcome.

5.1 Ineffective teacher training

There is no doubt that teachers' training in recent times has been low and defective. In the past, teachers' training used to follow rigorously defined admission requirements. It used to follow from Grade 3 to Grade 2 and to Grade 1, and these teachers are expected to teach in the primary schools. Later, the teacher training colleges were abolished, and the minimum entry requirement into the teaching profession was established by the NCE. Prospective teachers are expected to apply for NCE in the various colleges of education after graduating from secondary schools. Some scholars have faulted the suitability of the NCE programs for teaching in the primary school (Ukeje, 2000; Obanya, 2002; Obanya, 2004; Okam, 2008). The current NCE programs in the colleges of education are not suitable for teaching at the primary school level. These categories of teachers are expected to teach all the subjects in their classes. Thus, they are expected to have a sound knowledge of the entire syllabus at the primary school level. Unfortunately, these teachers, who initially have no teaching background, are not effectively trained within the three-year training program and thus unprepared to teach all the primary school subjects. The curricula offered during the NCE Program do not effectively cover the depth of knowledge required at the secondary level. The NCE teachers are only suitable to teach in the junior secondary school.

Ukeje (2000) argued that the current NCE Program, in which each prospective teacher takes at most two teaching subjects and 12 credits of general studies, does not adequately

prepare them for primary school teaching. Most of them muddle through the teaching of all the subjects based on their secondary school knowledge. This is clearly unsatisfactory. Moreover, some of them did not even study the subjects at the secondary school level. This reflects a lack of academic standards rather than a meaningful teaching process. Grade 2 teachers are even better prepared to teach in the primary school than the current NCE teachers (Ukeji, 2000). This is because the Grade 2 teacher's curriculum covered all the primary school subjects. This invariably rendered current NCE teacher education programs grossly unsuitable or inappropriate for the 21st century challenges. This obviously is a challenge for the development agenda. There is, therefore, a need for the type of teacher training at the NCE level that will provide a sound knowledge of all primary school subjects. For instance, courses in primary education studies should be made mandatory for all NCE students. It should be a core course for all NCE students irrespective of their discipline.

Another aspect of the defective teacher training program has to do with the dichotomy prevailing in the pre-service education of graduate teachers operating at the secondary level. The problem arises from the differentiations between teachers who trained through the four-year concurrent degree programs normally designed as B.Sc. and B.Ed., and the teachers who have trained through the consecutive degree program of a total of five years post-secondary certificate direction. The dichotomy is that the consecutive degree program was adjudged to be superior to the concurrent program in terms of academic content. However, consecutive degree programs have been adjudged to produce less professionally motivated and oriented teachers and largely breed birds of passage in the teaching profession.

Similarly, the existence of a variety of four-year concurrent first-degree programs designed as B.Sc, Ed, B.A, and B.Ed has also brought about a lot of inconsistency and uncoordinated degree programs in the tertiary institutions. This development has caused confusion and degeneration of the teacher education degree programs in Nigerian universities. This confusion was further compounded by the fact that some universities designated all their educational degrees as B.Ed (Obanya, 2002). While others made a distinction between programs with academic teaching subjects and those on purely professional education disciplines.

Also related to the above is the introduction of the professional four-year degree programs as concurrent degree programs in education in Nigerian universities in such fields as guidance and counselling, curriculum development, educational psychology, and educational administration, which are designated as the B.Ed degree (Yusuf, 2013). This development marked the origin of the confusion and the crisis in terms of the effective training of qualitative and competent teachers for the secondary school. In most cases, holders of professional degrees in education are wrongly utilized as they are made to teach each of the classroom teachers in subjects that they have not specialized in. Many of those who read these educational courses were NCE holders who did not have the required qualifications to further their studies in their initial disciplines. For instance, a student with an Islamic studies background, both at NCE or B.Ed levels, goes ahead to read guidance and counselling or educational psychology, library science, etc., at B.Ed or master's level. After graduation, the person might not have a place at the secondary school level. Some of these people are even employed to teach such educational courses in the College of Education. These further damages the reputation and status of professionalism that teacher education was aimed at achieving.

5.2 Faulty requirement and lack of effective staff development

The quality of manpower of any nation depends on its education sector (Asaju et al., 2013). This sector is the producer and user of high-level manpower. Indeed, it is the biggest industry in terms of employment, payroll and investment. When the education sector becomes ineffective, the quality of manpower also declines, which in turn affects other sectors of the economy. Since the early days of Nigerian independence, teachers' recruitment has been strictly based on merit and was given priority, as contained in the Ashby Commission Report of 1960 (Asiwaju, 1972). This is not the situation today, as a teaching job is seen as the last resort and for the duller.

Obanya (2004) disclosed that the recruitment of teachers, particularly in the tertiary institutions, has not been treated with all the seriousness it deserved. He regretted that in recent times, persons with very high academic and professional capabilities and potentialities are not recruited into these institutions. He lamented that, unlike in the past, most of our universities and colleges of education are currently recruiting or employing misfits into these institutions.

The current process, which is supposed to be based on merit, has been jeopardized by all kinds of sentiments. The interview is mostly conducted to officially formalize or legalize these irregularities. These irregularities negatively affect teacher education and the standard of education in Nigeria. Olaofe (2005) asserted that "the appointment of teachers who themselves are not better than the children they teach, among other factors, is a complete mockery of a sound educational system."

On the issue of staff development, the teachers are expected on a consistent basis to undertake training programs that will enhance their knowledge and make them more professional in their various fields. This could not be said of most teachers in our educational institutions in Nigeria. Obanya (2004) lamented that well-defined staff development programs are gradually vanishing in our universities and in other tertiary institutions. The reasons for this are not far-fetched, where programs prevailed; access to them is not automated for deserving staff. Also, enough funds are not made available for research facilities. Even when the funds are made available, they are not judiciously utilized. Funds allocated for staff development is mostly utilized by the management to undertake all kinds of unnecessary and fictitious seminars and workshops that are not beneficial to academic excellence. This situation constituted a serious impediment to effective teacher education in Nigeria.

As Onah (2003) has rightly said, "an untrained staff is a liability to a dynamic organisation, as he not only applies the wrong skills but also impacts the wrong knowledge to another coming after him and those he happens to be supervising." This is currently the situation in most of our educational institutions in Nigeria. These developments are counter-productive to the ideal intrinsic in qualities scaling of career development and orientation of teachers in Nigeria.

5.3 Defective curriculum

The curriculum is the sum of all planned and guided programs by means of which the formal educational system of a nation is executed or carried out (NTI, n.d.). The curriculum is the planned and guided experience and intended outcomes (Tanner and Tanner, 1995), and it is the detailed thinking of society on what it means to achieve through education (Ben-Yunusa, 2002). The curriculum includes all the activities of the school aimed at the overall development of the child. Therefore, the classroom teachers are the major stakeholders in curriculum implementation.

However, the curriculum as we have it in Nigeria is defective. Firstly, it does not properly reflect the present global reality in the various subjects. Secondly, the curriculum in the Nigerian context lacks definite direction and focus. This could be attributed to the lack of focus and meaningful direction in both the design and implementation of the curriculum, as well as a lack of specific and clearly defined national goals for which the country wishes to use its education for as per the 'instrument par excellence'. These factors constitute an impediment to the attainment of a standard and effective teacher education.

5.4 Funding

Another major problem of teacher education, which could be a major challenge for the achievement of the Seven-Point Agenda, is low funding of education as well as its ineffective utilization. There is a general agreement among scholars that educational funding is low. Onyeachu (2007) highlighted that poor funding is one of the factors limiting effective teacher education in Nigeria.

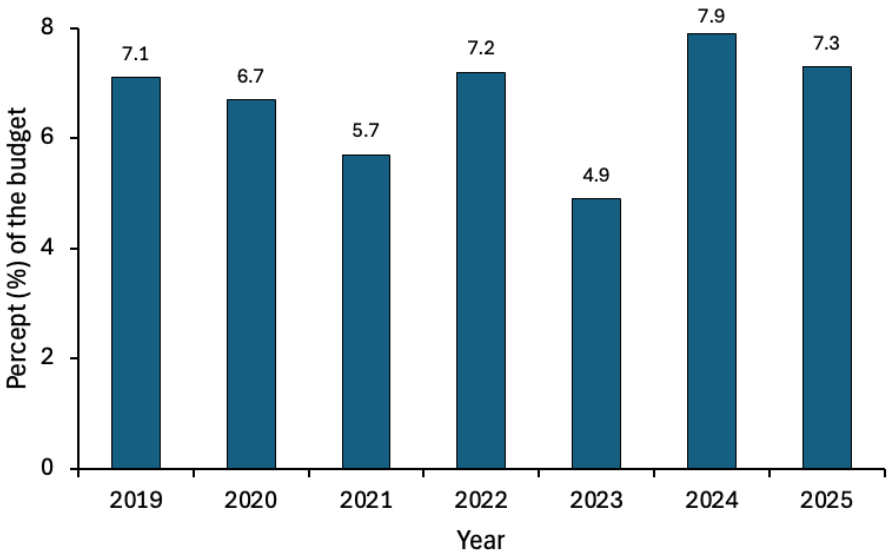

Fig. 1. Percentage of budget allocation to education in Nigeria (Businessday.ng, 2025).

An examination of the federal government allocation in the last seven years indicates that the educational sector is grossly underfunded (Fig. 1). Even meeting the UNESCO standard of 26 percent of the annual budget has not been realized in Nigeria. A breakdown of the budgetary allocation shows that 8.36 percent was allocated in 2000, 7.00 percent in 2002, 7.00 percent in 2003, 12.00 percent in 2004, 11.00 percent in 2005, 11.00 percent in 2006, 8.00 percent in 2007, and 13.00 percent in 2008. Budgetary allocations to education from 2000–2025, particularly in Nigeria, have generally fallen significantly below UNESCO's recommended 15–20% benchmarks, averaging much lower (around 6–9%), despite some fluctuations and recent increases in specific areas like TET Fund, Nigeria's allocation consistently missed targets, leading to underfunding and poor outcomes, although 2024 showed a slight uptick to around 7.9% of the budget for education overall (**Fig. 1**). This is also the trend in all the states of the federation.

Another aspect of the problem of funding is that the budget allocations are also not properly channeled or utilized. A large percentage or bulk of money budgeted for education goes for recurrent expenditure, i.e., salaries and allowances, emoluments, staff welfare, etc., to the detriment of infrastructural development. For instance, 77.3 percent of the 210 billion allocated to the sector in the 2008 budget was meant for recurrent expenditure, leaving only 22.7 percent of capital expenditure. This development can be attributed to the decay and inadequacy of infrastructural facilities in our educational institutions. The capital expenditure is important because it could be used to maintain old infrastructure and build new ones (i.e., building of classrooms, hostels, laboratories, chairs, and tables, etc.), which makes teacher education easy and functional. The above problems are further compounded by the lack of financial management and accountability within the government agencies, which has led to the diversion of a substantial amount of this fund for various other purposes.

5.5 Learning environment

Inadequate infrastructural facilities and other basic teaching and learning materials constitute another major limitation for teacher education and education standards in Nigeria. Olaofe (2005) brightly painted a picture of the situation, thus, "education with a ratio of one textbook

to twelve students, dilapidated school rooms and lecture halls, education without basic teaching and learning facilities is a complete mockery of a sound education system". The dilapidating nature of learning facilities in all the levels of our educational institutions has reached a crisis.

Most public primary and secondary schools are in pitiable condition with leaking roofs, cracked walls, lack of desks, writing materials, libraries, laboratories and not even chairs and tables for students and teachers. The situation is not different in our tertiary institutions. Dilapidated classrooms, theatre halls, lack of enough seats and lighting in the classrooms and theatre halls, ill-equipped laboratories and libraries show a vivid picture of the situation in the tertiary institutions. There is also a lack of necessary teaching and learning materials at all levels of our educational institutions.

These problems are compounded by the dichotomy inherent in the funds allocated to the educational sector, in which about 77.3 percent of it is used as recurrent expenditure to the detriment of capital expenditure, which takes care of infrastructural development and maintenance. In this situation, effective teaching and learning will be very difficult.

5.6 Lack of motivation

Poor remuneration of teachers at all levels of our educational institution cannot be over emphasized. This has resulted in incessant strike actions embarked upon by the teachers. Majority of primary school teachers are known to earn N 4,000 per month, which is less than US $30 as against the minimum wage of N 7,500, that is about US $53. So, why do you expect that kind of person to teach a child?

Teachers' salaries at the state level, especially at the primary and secondary levels, are nothing to write home about. A case study of Kaduna state, where teachers with NCE qualifications take home less than N 10,000, i.e., about $70, as monthly pay. This is not up to a level 2 officer's pay in the federal ministry or parastatals; this is the same in many private schools.

The poor remuneration adversely affects the morale of the teachers and consequently their willingness to deliver. This situation has greatly affected the standard of education in Nigeria.

5.7 Inconsistent policy and poor policy implementation

The government has no doubt had good policy intentions, but poor policy implementation and lack of consistency constitute the major problem. The Nigerian educational policy, as indicated in the 1999 Constitution, states that "government shall promote science and technology, and the government shall strive to eradicate illiteracy, and to this end government shall also provide free compulsory and universal primary education and free adult literacy programs" (FGN, 1999). This policy is hinged on national goal and aspirations of the nation, which include; the building of a free democratic society, a just and egalitarian society, a united strong and self-reliant nation; a great and dynamic economy and a land full of bright opportunities for all citizens of the country at primary, secondary and tertiary levels for both within and outside the formal school system. These are quite laudable policy intentions, but the lack of proper funding and poor implementation has rendered them ineffective.

Another bane of educational policy in Nigeria is inconsistent or a lack of policy continuity. The Nigerian educational system has changed from 1980 to date. Until 1980, the educational system was 7–5–2–3. It has changed with the introduction of 6–3–3–4, and it is now 9–3–4. At first, it was 7 years of primary school education, 5 years in secondary school, 2 years of advanced college, and 3 years in the university. The 6–3–3–4 was 6 years of primary school education, 3 years in junior secondary school, 3 years in senior secondary school, and 4 years in the university. The 9–3–4 was 9 years of primary and post primary school, 3 years of senior secondary school, and 4 years in the university.

Also, during the last regime, some reforms were undertaken to sanitize the education sector, the 21 parastatals in the ministry were compressed to six, and some of the unity

schools were slated for privatization. These reforms have also been reversed by the Yar'adua administration. These policy changes, among others, are indications of policy inconsistency inherent in our educational system. It also indicates poor policy planning and evaluation in the educational sector.

Awuzie (2008) described Nigeria's educational policy as "missionary in concept, crisis management in orientation and planning". Nigeria's educational policy is geared towards managing the arising crisis in the educational sector, rather than focusing on the developmental objectives of the country. That is why every regime tended to change policy without recourse to the achievement and suitability of the one on the ground. This has a great implication for teacher education and educational development in general.

6 Recommendations

Teacher training should be made more practical-oriented. There is a need to improve its quality, effectiveness, and flexibility. The professionalism of the teaching profession should be the watchword. The National Teachers Registration Council should be legally empowered to supervise teacher training institutes across the country to ensure standards and prosecute offenders. Teachers' remuneration should be nationally harmonized so that there will be no differentiation in the salaries of teachers at the federal, state and local government levels. Additionally, teachers' remuneration should be adequately enhanced. The curricula need to be constantly reviewed to be adaptable to our peculiar environment, and they should also meet global reality. No nation developed without a huge investment in education; the government at all levels should invest more in the training and development of teachers. Teachers no doubt constitute the most vital capital in the education sector. Infrastructural development should also be intensified and made more available, as the existing ones have been overstretched. The policy objective of the educational system should be made more operational and pragmatic. Its implementation should also be done later. Policy consistency is also required. Finally, the implementers of educational policies and programs should imbibe the virtues of transparency and accountability in performing their duties. Political will is needed from the government to ensure the effective implementation and success of these educational policies and programs.

7 Conclusion

Education is a necessary long-term investment by the state to ensure and enhance its developmental efforts and the standard of living of the citizenry. Through the educational institutions, well-educated individuals will be produced who will bring their talents, knowledge, skills and experience to bear as they function in their various capacities in all the sectors of the economy. Education is, therefore, not only a prerequisite for economic growth and development but also a necessary and sufficient condition for political emancipation. It was in realization of the above fact that human capital development through education was made a top priority in the Seven-Point Agenda. This brought to bear the important place of the teacher and teacher education. However, for teacher education to be made functional to achieve its objectives and the overall national development objectives through the Seven-Point Agenda, it needs to overcome the challenges of ineffective teacher training programs, problems associated with teachers' professionalism, defective curriculum, improper recruitment and lack of conducive environment for teaching and learning, lack of motivation and inconsistency in education policy. When these challenges are overcome, the desire to produce effective, qualitative and professional teachers will be achieved. This will pave the way for the overall development of the education sector in terms of its quality and functionality, and the nation as a whole, as envisaged in the Sustainable Development Goals.

8 Ethical statements

This study does not involve human or animal subjects. Ethical approval was not required for this research. All data used were publicly available or obtained through proper channels, with consent where applicable.

9 Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest related to this study.

10 Data availability statement

All data were secondary data sourced from journals, books, newspapers, and official documents of the Federal government and non-governmental organizations.

11 Author contributions

Kayode Asaju: Conceptualization, investigation, and writing original draft preparation, review and editing. The author approved the final version of the manuscript.

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